



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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FEBRUARY 28, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COLOMBIAN MAN SENTENCED TO 33 YEARS FOR MASSIVE COCAINE CONSPIRACY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Colombian man was sentenced in federal court today after being convicted at trial of participating in a conspiracy responsible for distributing hundreds of kilograms of cocaine in the Kansas City area.

Fabio Montano, 35, a citizen of Colombia living in Houston, Texas, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this afternoon to 33 years and nine months in federal prison without parole. Graves noted that the sentence was the highest penalty available under the federal sentencing guidelines.

“A tough sentence is justified for a lifelong member of an internationally feared drug cartel in Colombia with a history of criminal violence,” Graves said. “**Montano** had an ongoing relationship with the infamous Cali cartel, which smuggled large quantities of cocaine into the Kansas City metropolitan area.”

On May 27, 2005, **Montano** was found guilty of participating in the cocaine conspiracy after a five-day jury trial. **Montano**, one of the major customers for cocaine being smuggled into the United States from via Mexico, received approximately five to 15 kilograms of cocaine each month for distribution in the Kansas City area between January 1996 and Nov. 29, 1998, Graves said. According to evidence presented during the trial, a total of 10 to 50 kilograms of cocaine were delivered each month to **Montano** and other co-conspirators in Kansas City for distribution during the nearly three-year-long conspiracy.

Montano was among five co-defendants charged in the March 9, 2004, superseding indictment. That indictment, Graves explained, replaced the original Nov. 30, 1998, federal indictment that included three additional co-defendants. All of the co-defendants in both indictments have either been convicted at trial or pleaded guilty.

On Nov. 14, 2005, co-defendant **Edwin R. Hinestroza**, 35, a citizen of Colombia who was living in Overland Park, Kan., was convicted in a jury trial of participating in the cocaine conspiracy, as well as using a firearm in relation to that drug-trafficking crime, and in so doing causing the murder of Julian Colon. Colon, a 23-year-old Colombian national who resided in Overland Park, Kan., was killed on Nov. 28, 1998. **Hinestroza**, who received shipments of 10 to 50 kilograms of cocaine each month for about three years, was also found today of interstate travel in furtherance of a murder-for-hire scheme in which **Hinestroza** paid \$3,000 for the murder of Colon. murdering a fellow member of the drug-trafficking conspiracy.

The jury was unable to reach a verdict of either death or life in prison during the sentencing phase of **Hinestroza's** trial, which will result in a mandatory sentence of life in federal prison without parole.

On April 27, 2000, a federal jury convicted co-defendants **German Sinisterra**, **Arboleda Ortiz** and **Plutarco Tello**, all Colombian nationals living in Houston, Texas, of conspiracy to distribute cocaine, use of a firearm resulting in murder in a drug trafficking crime, and interstate travel in furtherance of murder for hire. **Sinisterra** and **Ortiz** have been sentenced to death and **Tello** has been sentenced to life imprisonment without parole.

Evidence presented at those trials showed that **Hinestroza**, **Ortiz**, **Sinisterra** and **Tello** murdered Colon and beat Colon's nephew, Heberth Andres Borja-Molina, then 17 years old, also a Colombian national, after luring them to a house near Swope Park in Kansas City, Mo. **Hinestroza** ordered the execution of both men in an effort to appease the Colombian cocaine cartel known as La Oficina, Graves said.

Ortiz, **Sinisterra** and **Tello** were arrested soon afterward, but **Hinestroza** fled to Texas and remained a fugitive from justice for more than five years. When he was arrested in Memphis, Tenn., on Feb. 3, 2004, he was still in the business of trafficking narcotics. At the time of his arrest, Graves said, **Hinestroza** was in possession of more than eight kilograms of cocaine, 30 ounces of heroin, \$81,000 in cash and a semi-automatic handgun.

Following **Hinestroza's** arrest, he was charged in a superseding indictment along with **Montano** and three additional co-conspirators in the conspiracy to distribute cocaine. **Hinestroza** was the only co-defendant charged with the murder of Colon as part of that superseding indictment.

Co-defendant **Percy L. Smith**, 45, with addresses in both Kansas City, Mo., and Kansas City, Kan., was sentenced on Jan. 5, 2006, to eight years in federal prison without parole. On June 28, 2004, **Smith** pleaded guilty to his role in the conspiracy. **Smith** admitted that he purchased an average of five kilograms or more of cocaine per month, for distribution in the Kansas City area.

Co-defendant **Shelly Valdora Anderson**, 37, of Houston, was sentenced on Jan. 3, 2006, to five years in federal prison without parole. **Anderson** pleaded guilty to her role in the

conspiracy on July 7, 2004.

Co-defendant **Airton Mosquera**, 37, a citizen of Colombia living in Houston, pleaded guilty on June 28, 2004, and awaits sentencing. **Mosquera** helped package and load cocaine in Houston for transport to Kansas City, Graves said. **Mosquera** also admitted that he transported cocaine from Texas to the Kansas City area, then returned to Texas with the cash proceeds of cocaine sales. For example, Graves said, on one such trip **Mosquera** drove a Nissan Maxima back to Houston with \$206,980 from cocaine sales in a hidden compartment in the gas tank. That money was seized when **Mosquera** was stopped by law enforcement officers.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jeff Valenti, Gregg R. Coonrod and Kathleen D. Mahoney. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Overland Park, Kan., Police Department, the Leawood, Kan., Police Department and the Johnson County, Kan., Sheriff's Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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